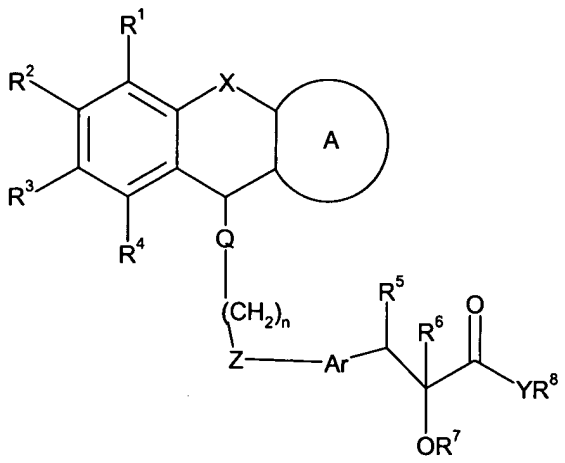
What is claimed is:

1. A compound of formula (Ia)



(Ia)

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, formyl, or C_{1-12}alkyl, C_{4-12}-alkenynyl, C_{2-12}-alkenyl, C_{2-12}-alkynyl, C_{1-12}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, acyloxy, hydroxyC_{1-12}alkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-12}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC_{1-12}alkyl, C_{1-12}alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, aralkoxycarbonyl, C_{1-12}alkoxyC_{1-12}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-12}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-12}alkyl, C_{1-12}alkylthio, thioC_{1-12}alkyl, C_{1-12}alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino, aralkoxycarbonylamino, -COR^{11}, or -SO_2R^{12}, wherein R^{11} and R^{12} independently of each other are selected from hydroxy, halogen, perhalomethyl, C_{1-6}alkoxy or amino optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl, perhalomethyl or aryl; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano;
or R^1 and R^2, R^2 and R^3 and/or R^3 and R^4, together with the carbon atoms to which they are attached, may form a cyclic ring containing from 5 to 7 carbon atoms optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl;

ring A represents a 5-6 membered cyclic ring, optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, formyl, or C_{1-12}alkyl, C_{4-12}-alkenynyl, C_{2-12}-alkenyl, C_{2-12}-alkynyl, C_{1-12}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, acyloxy, hydroxyC_{1-12}alkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-12}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino,

aminoC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, aralkoxycarbonyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, aryloxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, aralkoxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkylthio, thioC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino, aralkoxycarbonylamino, -COR^{11}, or -SO$_2$R^{12}, wherein R^{11} and R^{12} independently of each other are selected from hydroxy, halogen, perhalomethyl, C$_{1-6}$alkoxy or amino optionally substituted with one or more C$_{1-6}$alkyl, perhalomethyl or aryl; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano;

X is -O-, -(NR^9)-CH$_2$-, -(C=O)-, -(NR^9)-S(O$_2$)-, -(NR^9)-, -(CO)-(CHR^9)-, -S-, -(SO)-, -(SO$_2$)-, -CH$_2$-O-CH$_2$-, wherein R^9 is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, formyl, C$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, acyloxy, hydroxyalkyl, amino, acylamino, C$_{1-12}$alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, aralkoxycarbonyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, aryloxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, aralkoxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkylthio, thioC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino, aralkoxycarbonylamino, -COR^{13}, or -SO$_2$R^{14}, wherein R^{13} and R^{14} independently of each other are selected from hydroxy, halogen, C$_{1-6}$alkoxy, amino optionally substituted with one or more C$_{1-6}$alkyl, perhalomethyl or aryl;

Z is -CH$_2$-, -O-, -S-, >SO$_2$,, >NR^{15}, wherein R^{15} is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, formyl, C$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, acyloxy, hydroxyalkyl, amino, acylamino, C$_{1-12}$alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, aralkoxycarbonyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, aryloxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, aralkoxyC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkylthio, thioC$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{1-12}$alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino, aralkoxycarbonylamino, -COR^{16}, or -SO$_2$R^{17}, wherein R^{16} and R^{17} independently of each other are selected from hydroxy, halogen, C$_{1-6}$alkoxy, amino optionally substituted with one or more C$_{1-6}$alkyl, perhalomethyl or aryl;

Q is -O-, -S-, >NR^{18} wherein R^{18} is hydrogen or C$_{1-6}$alkyl;

Ar represents arylene, heteroarylene, or a divalent heterocyclic group optionally substituted with one or more C$_{1-6}$alkyl or aryl;

R^5 represents hydrogen, hydroxy, halogen, C$_{1-12}$alkoxy, C$_{1-12}$alkyl, C$_{4-12}$-alkenynyl, C$_{2-12}$-alkenyl, C$_{2-12}$-alkynyl or aralkyl; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano; or R^5 forms a bond together with R^6;

R^6 represents hydrogen, hydroxy, halogen, C_{1-12}alkoxy, C_{1-12}alkyl, C_{4-12}-alkenynyl, C_{2-12}-alkenyl, C_{2-12}-alkynyl, acyl or aralkyl; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano; or R^6 forms a bond together with R^5;

R^7 represents hydrogen, C_{1-12}alkyl, C_{4-12}-alkenynyl, C_{2-12}-alkenyl, C_{2-12}-alkynyl, aryl, aralkyl, C_{1-12}alkoxyC_{1-12}alkyl, C_{1-12}alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, C_{1-12}alkylaminocarbonyl, arylaminocarbonyl, acyl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl or heteroaralkyl groups; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano;

R^8 represents hydrogen, C_{1-12}alkyl, C_{4-12}-alkenynyl, C_{2-12}-alkenyl, C_{2-12}-alkynyl, aryl, aralkyl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl or heteroaralkyl groups; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano;

Y represents oxygen, sulphur or NR^{10}, where R^{10} represents hydrogen, C_{1-12}alkyl, aryl, hydroxyC_{1-12}alkyl or aralkyl groups or when Y is NR^{10}, R^8 and R^{10} may form a 5 or 6 membered nitrogen containing ring, optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl;

n is an integer ranging from 1 to 4;

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, cyano, or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, acyloxy, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-7}alkylamino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, aralkoxycarbonyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkylthio, thioC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino, aralkoxycarbonylamino, $-COR^{11}$, or $-SO_2R^{12}$, wherein R^{11} and R^{12} independently of each other are selected from hydroxy, perhalomethyl, C_{1-6}alkoxy or amino optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl, perhalomethyl or aryl; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano;
or R^1 and R^2, R^2 and R^3 and/or R^3 and R^4 may form a cyclic ring containing from 5 to 7 carbon atoms optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl.

3. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, cyano, or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-7}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkylthio, thioC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino or aralkoxycarbonylamino.

4. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, cyano, or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, acyl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, amino, C_{1-7}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alky or C_{1-7}alkylthio.

5. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, halogen, perhalomethyl, or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, aryl, aralkyl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl or aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl.

6. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, halogen or C_{1-7}alkyl.

7. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, chlorine or methyl.

8. A compound of claim 1 wherein ring A represents a 5-6 membered cyclic ring, optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, cyano or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, acyloxy, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-7}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkylthio, thioC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino, aralkoxycarbonylamino, $-COR^{11}$, or $-SO_2R^{12}$, wherein R^{11} and R^{12} independently of each other are selected from hydroxy, perhalomethyl, C_{1-6}alkoxy or amino optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl, perhalomethyl or aryl; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy or cyano.

9. A compound of claim 1 wherein ring A represents a 5-6 membered cyclic ring, optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, cyano, or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, acyl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-7}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkylthio, thioC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino or aralkoxycarbonylamino.

10. A compound of claim 1 wherein ring A represents a 5-6 membered cyclic ring, optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, cyano, or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, acyl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, amino, C_{1-7}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl or C_{1-7}alkylthio.

11. A compound of claim 1 wherein ring A represents a 5-6 membered cyclic ring, optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl or C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aralkyl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl or aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl.

12. A compound of claim 1 wherein ring A represents a 5-6 membered cyclic ring, optionally substituted with one or more chlorine or methyl groups.

13. A compound of claim 1 wherein X is -O-, -(NR^9)-CH_2-, -(C=O)-, -(NR^9)-S(O_2)-, -(NR^9)-, -(CO)-(CHR^9)-, -S-, -(SO)-, -(SO_2)-, or -CH_2-O-CH_2-, wherein R^9 is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aryl, aryloxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl, heteroaralkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroaralkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, amino, acylamino, C_{1-7}alkyl-amino, arylamino, aralkylamino, aminoC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-12}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-12}alkylthio, thioC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonylamino, aryloxycarbonylamino or aralkoxycarbonylamino.

14. A compound of claim 1 wherein X is -O-, -(NR^9)-CH_2-, -(C=O)-, -(NR^9)-S(O_2)-, -(NR^9)-, -(CO)-(CHR^9)-, -S-, -(SO)-, -(SO_2)-, or -CH_2-O-CH_2-, wherein R^9 is hydrogen, halogen, hydroxy, C_{1-7}alkyl, aryl, aralkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-12}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl or aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl.

15. A compound of claim 1 wherein X is -O-, -(NR^9)-CH_2-, -(C=O)-, -(NR^9)-S(O_2)-, -(NR^9)-, -(CO)-(CHR^9)-, -S-, -(SO)-, -(SO_2)-, or -CH_2-O-CH_2-, wherein R^9 is hydrogen.

16. A compound of claim 1 wherein Z is -CH_2-, -O-, -S-, , >NR^{15}, wherein R^{15} is hydrogen, C_{1-12}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxy, aralkyl, aralkoxy, hydroxyalkyl, aminoC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-12}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, aryloxyC_{1-7}alkyl or aralkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl.

17. A compound of claim 1 wherein Z is -CH_2-, -O-, -S- or >NR^{15}, wherein R^{15} is hydrogen.

18. A compound of claim 1 wherein Z is -O-.

19. A compound of claim 1 wherein Q is -O-, -S- or >NR^{18} wherein R^{18} is hydrogen or methyl.

20. A compound of claim 1 wherein Q is -O- or >NR^{18} wherein R^{18} is methyl.

21. A compound of claim 1 wherein Ar represents arylene optionally substituted with one or more C_{1-6}alkyl or aryl.

22. A compound of claim 1 wherein Ar is phenyl.

23. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^5 is hydrogen, hydroxy, halogen, C_{1-7}alkoxy, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl or aralkyl, or R^5 forms a bond together with R^6.

24. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^5 is hydrogen or R^5 forms a bond together with R^6.

25. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^5 is hydrogen, hydroxy, halogen, C_{1-7}alkoxy, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl or aralkyl, or R^5 forms a bond together with R^6.

26. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^5 is hydrogen or R^5 forms a bond together with R^6.

27. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^7 is hydrogen, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, aryl, aralkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxyC_{1-7}alkyl, C_{1-7}alkoxycarbonyl, aryloxycarbonyl, C_{1-7}alkylaminocarbonyl, arylaminocarbonyl, acyl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl or heteroaralkyl.

28. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^7 is hydrogen, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl or C_{2-7}-alkynyl.

29. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^7 is C_{1-2}alkyl.

30. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^8 is hydrogen, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, aryl, aralkyl, heterocyclyl, heteroaryl or heteroaralkyl groups; optionally substituted with one or more halogen, perhalomethyl, hydroxy, nitro or cyano.

31. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^8 is hydrogen, C_{1-7}alkyl, C_{4-7}-alkenynyl, C_{2-7}-alkenyl, C_{2-7}-alkynyl, aryl or aralkyl.

32. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^8 is hydrogen or C_{1-2}alkyl.

33. A compound of claim 1 wherein Y is oxygen, sulphur or NR^{10}, where R^{10} is hydrogen, C_{1-7}alkyl, aryl, hydroxyC_{1-7}alkyl or aralkyl.

34. A compound of claim 1 wherein Y is oxygen.

35. A compound of claim 1 wherein n is an integer ranging from 2 to 3.

36. A compound of claim 1 wherein A is benzo.

37. A compound of claim 1 wherein A is a five membered ring containing S.

38. A compound of claim 1 wherein Q is -O-.

39. A compound of claim 1 wherein Q is -S-.

40. A compound of claim 1 wherein Q is $>NR^{18}$, wherein R^{18} is C_{1-6}-alkyl.

41. A compound of claim 1 wherein Z is -O-.

42. A compound of claim 1 wherein n is 2.

43. A compound of claim 1 wherein Q is -O-.

44. A compound of claim 1 wherein Ar is phenylene.

45. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^5 is H.

46. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^6 is H.

47. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^7 is ethyl.

48. A compound of claim 1 wherein R^8 is H.

49. A pharmaceutical composition comprising, as an active ingredient, an effective amount of a compound of claim 1 together with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

50. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 49 in unit dosage form, comprising from about 0.05 to about 100 mg of the compound.

51. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 49 wherein the route of administration is oral, nasal, transdermal, pulmonal, or parenteral.

52. A method of treating or preventing conditions mediated the Peroxisome Proliferator-Activated Receptors (PPAR), the method comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

53. A method of treating or preventing diabetes or obesity, the method comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound of claim 1.

54. The method of claim 52, wherein the effective amount of the compound is in the range of from about 0.05 to about 100 mg per day.